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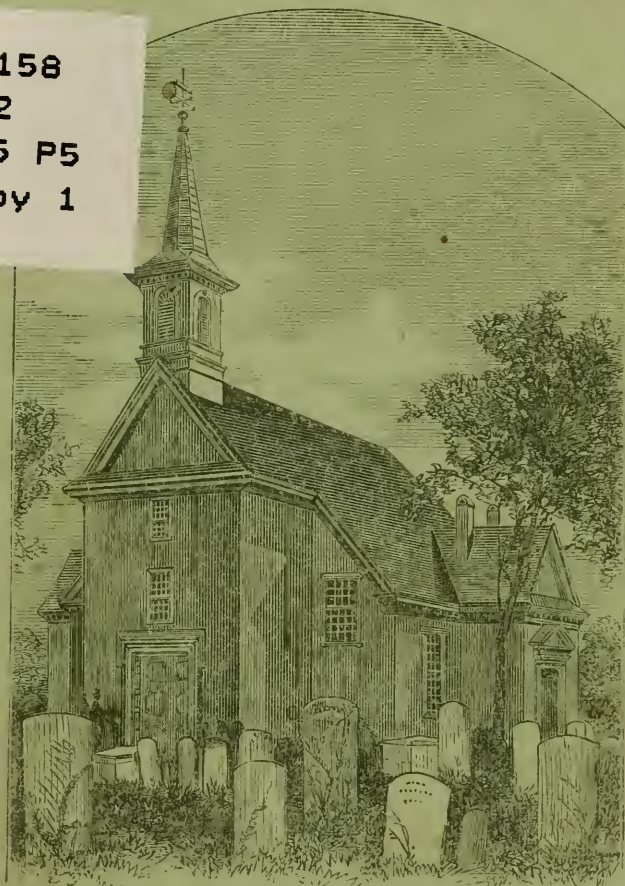
170TH ANNIVERSARY

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GLORIA DEI (OLD SWEDES') CHURCH.

PHILADELPHIA.

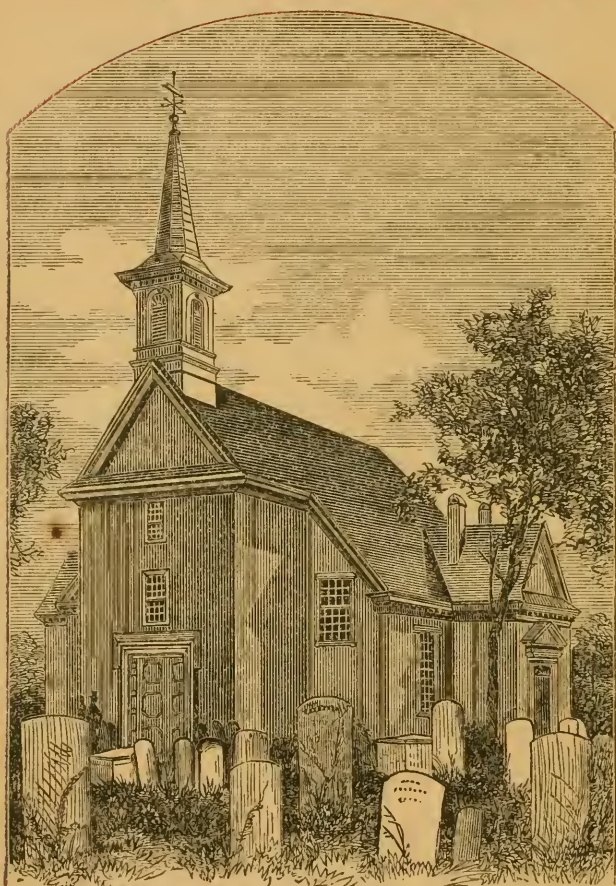
M'FARLAND, PRINTER, 311 WALNUT STREET.

1870.



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1905

The following sermons are published by special and earnest request. They were written simply for the pulpit, and are now printed as a slight memorial of a day long to be remembered by the friends and congregation of "Old Swedes'."

MORNING SERMON,

JUNE 19, 1870.

BY REV. SNYDER B. SIMES,

Rector of Gloria Dei Church.

“Therefore now let it please Thee to bless the house of Thy servant, that it may continue forever before Thee: for Thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it; and with Thy blessing let the house of Thy servant be blessed forever.”

II Samuel, vii, xxix.

On the first Sunday after Trinity in the year 1700, this Church was solemnly dedicated to the worship of Almighty God, and a sermon preached from these words of Scripture, by the Rev. Mr. Biork in the Swedish language. And as, we are told, there were present a great many English persons, and others from Philadelphia, a summary of the discourse was afterwards given by the clergyman in the English language. On this, the First Sunday after Trinity, in the year of our Lord 1870, we, beloved, are gathered in this same house of God to consider the days that are past, and to bow in thankful adoration before the Father of all mercies. 170 years have rolled by since that bright Sunday morning; over five generations have appeared on the stage of life, acted their respective parts, and disappeared forever from the scenes of earth; one minister after another has here proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation, and congre-

gation after congregation have met within these walls; and though now their very names are scarcely legible on the tomb-stones in our yard, yet still their work remains. Time, the great destroyer, has dealt gently with this sanctuary. There is not, I believe, any building now standing, within the borders of our State, which stood when this was erected, and yet to-day we are permitted in peace and security to worship here the Lord our God, and to witness the fulfillment of the dedication payer "that the house of the Lord might be blessed forever."

170 yéars ! how hard it is for us to form any conception of such a period of time. Look forward 170 years from now, and not only we, but our children, and our children's children, will be numbered with the dead, and should the wise purposes of God be still unaccomplished in the world, the year of grace 2040 will have been reached. Look backward for a moment, and the rise and progress or the decline and fall of the nations of the world will convey to the mind some idea of what has transpired during this long period. I say *long* period, not forgetting that in the early history of the world, human life was reckoned by hundreds rather than by scores of years, and that there are nations whose records go back for centuries, but where men live as they do here, where cities are built almost in a day, where so much is accomplished in so short a time, and the progressive spirit of the age can be bounded by no limits, 170 years is virtually a longer period than 1700 before the flood, or a thousand years of the dark ages. To form some idea of the 170 years

that are forever past, just glance with me at the condition of the old world, before we speak more particularly of our own country, for it is only as we grasp this thought that we can at all properly celebrate this anniversary of our Church, or realize the fulfillment of the words of the text.

170 years ago, and the mighty empire of Russia was just rising into prominence by the wisdom of Peter the Great, and the great city of St. Petersburg was not even founded, while Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, building on the foundation which had been laid by the prudence and skill of Gustavus Adolphus, succeeded in raising his country to a position she has never since occupied. 170 years ago, and the entrance of 20,000 Protestant refugees into Prussia exerted an influence for good on that country, which has been felt to the present moment, and though it was not till forty years afterwards that Frederick the Great began his wonderful career, yet the leaven that leavened the whole lump came with this persecuted people of God. 170 years ago, and the war of the Spanish Succession was agitating nearly the whole of Europe against France and Spain, while the Revolution in England had a few years before driven the weak and bigoted James the Second to France, and William the Prince of Orange, landing with his army, had ascended the vacant throne. 170 years ago, and the reign of the first George had not even begun, while this great republic of America was (with the exception of a few scattered settlements along the coast) but a vast wilderness where only here and there the face of the white man was to be seen.

As is well known to you all, North America was discovered a short time before the year 1500, but it was not till many years afterwards that any permanent settlement was made. Time will not permit me to go into the reasons for this delay, there is so much to be said that I can only glance here and there, and touch on points which would require not only sermons but volumes to unfold.

First came the settlement of Virginia in 1607, then that of the Dutch in 1614, on the Hudson river, then that of the Puritans at Plymouth in 1620, and then the settlement on the shores of the Delaware. The eastern or Jersey shore was undoubtedly first settled by the Dutch, but the western or Pennsylvania shore, by the Swedes. From Dr. Clay's valuable little book, "The Swedish Annals," (from which I have gathered most of my information, though I have confirmed his statements by a personal examination of many of the documents from which he derived his facts,) we learn that as early as July 2d, 1626, a proclamation was issued by the King of Sweden to form a trading colony on the shores of the Delaware (or South river as it was termed in distinction from the North or Hudson river) for the following reasons :

1st. (And permit me to call particular attention to this point, as I believe it is often overlooked) that the Christian religion would by that means be planted among the heathen.

2d. That his Majesty's dominions would be enlarged.

3d. That it would produce to the nation many positive advantages, and that the Swedes possessed all the means for carrying it on.

It would appear that the whole nation received this proposal of the King with the greatest satisfaction. Ships and all necessaries were provided, and the various officers were all appointed, but the breaking out of the German war, and the death of the King soon after put an end to the whole project. It was not till the year 1636 or 1637 under the patronage of Queen Christina (though Dr. Collin places it as early as 1634,) that two ships arrived and began the first permanent Swedish settlement. Holmes in his American Annals, Smith in his history of New Jersey, and even Watson in his Annals of Philadelphia, place it as early as 1631, but as it is admitted by all, that the Swedes came in the reign of Queen Christina, and as she was not queen until after the death of her father in 1632, this must be a mistake. However, as Fort Christina was begun early in 1638, they must have landed not later than 1637 ; many years before the settlement of Penn took place. They immediately purchased from the Indians the whole western shore of the Delaware from Cape Henlopen to the Trenton Falls, and had the boundaries determined by fixed stakes and marks, and in the instructions to Governor Printz, dated August 15th, 1642, he is to positively deny the pretended right of the Dutch to any part of the land on the west side of the river, and if friendly negotiations prove fruitless to repel force by force. The new settlers were, however, unable to contend with the force that came from New Amsterdam under Governor Stuyvesant, and in 1655 so small a fleet as six vessels and 700 men compelled an entire surrender to the Dutch conqueror. The

buildings were all destroyed, and the chief people carried off to New York, and afterwards to Holland, while the common people were allowed to remain under the rule of the Dutch Governor. Their triumph however was of short duration, for in 1664 Charles the Second granted a patent to his brother James, Duke of York and Albany, to all the Dutch possessions, and sending a powerful army to enforce his claims, the whole country fell under British rule and so remained, (except when the Dutch regained possession for a few years,) till by the appeal to arms in 1776 these colonies were declared free and independent States. The first English families settled in Jersey, and in 1677 the ship Kent, with 25 passengers, mostly Friends, came to these far distant shores. William Penn, as is well known, did not himself set sail from England until August 1682, on the famous ship Welcome, and landed at New Castle on the 27th of October of the same year, almost 50 years after the first Swedish settlement.

Bearing this fact in mind, let us now see in what relation they stood to the first inhabitants of the land. We have before said that they purchased the land from the Indians, and though the purchase money was but trifling, yet so likewise were the gifts of Penn. The acknowledgment of the rights of the red man, the denial that might makes right, and the desire to maintain peaceful relations with the men of the forest, are however to be remembered, and the actuating motives give to the Swedes and Friends a just claim upon the respect of all. But they were not satisfied in merely purchasing the land. They

were not simply Swedes, they were Christians, and very early they made efforts to enlighten the darkness of the heathen mind. Unlike the noble band of Puritans, they did not come for freedom to worship God, this they enjoyed in their own land. They did not come simply for the love of adventure, or for purposes of traffic, but along with these they combined the far higher work of missionaries of the cross. In a little book printed in 1702, under the patronage of Charles the Twelfth, by Thomas Comenius-Holm, a grand-son of one of the first missionaries, (entitled "A Description of the Province of New Sweden, now called by the English Pennsylvania in America," and which has been translated for the Historical Society of Pennsylvania,) is the following account of the first attempt to convey the knowledge of the truth to the red man. "The Indians," says he, "were frequent visitors at my grand-father's house. When for the first time he performed service in the Swedish congregation, they came to hear him, and greatly wondered that he had so much to say, and that he stood alone talking so long, while all the rest were listening in silence. This excited in them strange suspicions; they thought every thing was not right, and that some conspiracy was going forward amongst us, in consequence of which my grand-father's life was in constant danger from the Indians, who daily came to him, and asked him many questions. In these conversations he gradually succeeded in making them understand, that there was one Lord God, that He was self-existent, one, and in three persons; how the same God

had made the world from nothing, and created a man and placed him on earth and called him Adam, from whom all other mensprung; how the same Adam afterwards by his disobedience had sinned against his Creator, and by that sin had involved in it all his descendants; how God sent then upon this earth His only Son Jesus Christ, who was born of the Virgin Mary, for the redemption and salvation of mankind; how He died upon the cross, and was raised again the third day, and how after forty days He ascended to Heaven, whence He will return at a future day to judge the quick and dead." We read further that they had great pleasure in hearing these things, so that he gained their affection, and they visited and sent to him very frequently, and as Captain John Smith relates of the Virginia Indians, they were ready to exelaim, "that so far as the cannon and guns of the Christians exceeded the bow and arrows of the Indians in shooting, so far was their God superior to that of the Indians." I have given this account just as it was written because I believe that one of the reasons why this house of the Lord has been so blessed, is because these pious men sought to carry the blessings of the Gospel to those sitting in the region and the shadow of death, and, as you have just heard, sought to lead them to the truth by proclaiming it in its simplicity and in its fullness. And permit me here to say, that if this nation would not learn the terrible lesson of what God thinks of contempt and injustice towards an inferior race, we must act fairly and honestly, and as Christians, in our relations with the Indians now in the land. It mat-

ters not how corrupt and depraved, how cruel and treacherous they may be, as good citizens we are to protect them in their rights, and as Christians we are to extend to them the blessings of the Gospel. Not satisfied, however, with simply conversing with them, this missionary acquired their language, so that Luther's Catechism was translated into the Indian tongue, and, as Dr. Clay justly remarks, "the Swedes may claim the honor of being the first missionaries among the Indians in Pennsylvania, and that perhaps the very first work translated into their language was this Catechism by Campanius."

Leaving this subject so full of suggestive topics, let me call attention to the concern the early Swedes ever manifested in the maintenance of Divine worship, and the efforts put forth to obtain the services of ministers of the Gospel. In the very first colony they were accompanied by a clergyman, and almost every vessel had its chaplain, but when the English became masters of the soil, the intercourse with the mother country gradually dropped off, and for a long time they were left to get along as they best could. Being an industrious and thrifty people, they could manage well enough in temporal affairs, but as they were entirely dependent upon Sweden for clergymen, for many years the Rev. Mr. Locke, (an honored name now both in Jersey and in this city,) was their only minister. Their first church was consecrated as early as 1646, on Tinicum Island, but as its distance from Wicaco rendered it inconvenient, the block house, which stood about where this church now stands, was converted into a place of worship,

and the first service held on Trinity Sunday, 1677. This block house was made of logs, and had loop holes in place of window lights, which might serve for fire arms in case of need. The congregation also was accustomed to bring fire-arms with them to prevent surprise, but ostensibly to use for any wild game that might be encountered in coming to and from church. Even after its consecration, it was sometimes used as a place of refuge. We are told that at one time some evil disposed Indians from Jersey, meditated an attack upon the settlement while the men were away. It so happened that the women were engaged in making soap, which they forthwith took, scalding hot, to the block house, and not knowing what their fate might be if captured, they also took fuel to keep it hot. With their conchs an alarm was sounded, and when the Indians began to undermine the building, the scalding soap was poured down, and thus they were kept at bay till the settlers began to approach when they hastily fled.

It was near this block house that William Penn landed. At that time the site of the block house was a shaded knoll sloping gradually down to the river; north of it, where Christian Street is, was a little inlet in which a shallop might ride, and on the north side of the inlet was another pleasant knoll, on which was situated the primitive log cabin of the Swanson brothers, who were at that time owners of all that has since been known as Southwark, Moyamensing and Passyunk. In this old block house the Rev. Mr. Fabritius preached for fourteen

years, though for nine years he was entirely blind, and when by the infirmity of age, he was able to officiate no longer, the people were under serious apprehension lest they should be left without a minister. Twice appeals were sent to Sweden, but the letters never reached their place of destination ; then application was made to the Lutheran Consistory, of Amsterdam, since their ignorance of the English language rendered it useless to apply to England, but still no preacher came and the prospects were dark and gloomy indeed. Still loving their church and their God, when all the ministers were dead they appointed two worthy and pious men as lay readers, who offered up their well-known prayers and read prepared sermons from the desk. When they had almost despaired of obtaining a regularly ordained clergyman, then their hearts were gladdened by the intelligence that news had reached Sweden of their destitute spiritual condition and that the matter had been laid before the King. Words can not express the joy of the colonists when this letter was received. As loyal subjects, the letter was at once placed before the English Governor (William Markham) who expressed himself much gratified and advised an immediate answer. I wish I had time to read that letter to you, for I do not wonder that when it was received in Sweden it was copied by many persons, and drew tears from the eyes of many more, as they listened to the simple but touching appeal ; for if ever these words of Amos were verified " Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a

famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord," they were fulfilled in the case before us. For we read, after enumerating their evidences of temporal prosperity, "we have great reason to thank the Almighty for His manifold mercies and bounties; God grant that we may also have good shepherds to feed us with His holy word and sacraments." This letter was signed by thirty of the principal men of the colony and sent to Sweden. We learn that as soon as the letter arrived at Stockholm, "his Majesty, Charles the Eleventh, of glorious memory, in order to promote the preservation of our holy religion among the small number of settlers in America," wrote to the Archbishop of Upsal, and the Rev. Mr. Rudman, the Rev. Mr. Biork, and the Rev. Mr. Auren were selected for the work. To form some idea of the light in which such an undertaking was viewed in those days, let me here state, that after the King had appropriated \$3,000 for the expenses of the missionaries, and had given orders to have a good ship ready for their passage; the clergymen came into his presence, and looking upon them, much as we would look upon missionaries going to Africa, he said, "Go now in the name of the Lord, to the place whither I send you, God be with you and prosper your undertaking."

With the departure of these clergymen and their arrival here we now come to another definite period in the history of the colony, and from that time to the present the documents and papers are many and interesting. We will not follow their journey, let it

suffice to say, that after the usual perils of the sea they reached the settlement and were received with tears of joy. In an extract from a letter written by the Rev. Mr. Biork, dated October 29th, 1697, we read "before we had been there a day and a night, the people flocked in great numbers to see us. They welcomed us with great joy, and hardly believed we had arrived until they saw us. On the 27th of June we had only a simple meeting of prayer and thanksgiving at the lower congregation. On the 29th, we went up to Philadelphia, a clever little town, and waited on the Lieutenant-Governor, who, when he saw our credentials received us with great kindness." For we must not forget, brethren, that where this church now stands was then considered quite a distance from Philadelphia, and as late as 1743, the English Secretary complained to Thomas Penn, who was very fond of a ramble to our church, in these words, "Southwark is getting gradually disfigured by erecting irregular and mean houses, thereby so marring its beauty that when you return you will lose your pretty walk to Wicaco." And though it seems strange to us now to speak of this mighty city with its hundreds of thousands of inhabitants, as "a clever little town," yet at that time it was only a small place indeed, of about fourteen years old. The Rev. Mr. Rudman's letter home likewise confirms the statement of his colleague, "the minister's garden and house," says he, "are at a distance of four English miles from Philadelphia, a clever town built by the Quakers."

Immediately measures were put on foot to build

a suitable place of worship, and on this point he says, "in order to build our church we are about to raise the sum of £400, but that will not be difficult, they are so very glad to have us among them. They look upon us as if we were angels from heaven. Of this they have assured me with many tears, and we may truly say that there is no place in the world, where a clergyman may be so happy as in this country."

Stimulated by the presence of a minister speaking their own language, and regularly commissioned by the ecclesiastical authorities in Sweden, the lower congregation at Christina, went immediately to work, and on Trinity Sunday, 1699, the dedication sermon of the Old Swedes' Church of Wilmington (as it is now called) was preached from the words, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." For a long time, however, that church was abandoned, though now again, I am happy to say, the praises of God are there sung, and His truth proclaimed; but from the time *this* church was opened, its courts have ever been trod by the servants of the Lord, and the worship of the sanctuary maintained. The reason why this church was not completed as soon as the one at Christina was owing to the fact that they could not agree as to where it should be erected. They were just as anxious to have a church as their brethren at Christina, but those living on the Schuylkill, where the clergyman resided, wished the church there, while those on the Delaware, where the old block church stood, wished it here. Mr. Rudman himself preferred Passyunk as

being nearer his residence, but he was more anxious for harmony and peace. One conference after another was held without avail, till at last in a general meeting of the congregation, it was decided to have the matter settled by lot. The blessing of God was invoked by prayer and singing, and when the decision was made in favor of Wicaco, dissension ceased and all joined in a cheerful hymn of praise. Some little trouble afterwards arose about some trifling matters, and the work was longer delayed; but all the arrangements being at last completed, the same bricklayers and carpenters who had built the church at Christina were employed here, and as we said before, on the First Sunday after Trinity, in the year 1700, the church was dedicated, and the sermon preached from the words of the text we have selected to-day. It was then looked upon as a masterpiece of workmanship, and Watson does not hesitate to say that this little church of ours was then deemed "a great edifice, and so generally spoken of, for certainly nothing was then equal to it as a public building in the city." *Tempora mutantur* since then, but still we say, long may it stand as one of the ancient land-marks of Philadelphia, and though now the sailor can hardly see our unpretending spire as he comes home from his long voyage, yet still many a heart is yet gladdened as from the vessel's deck the steeple of "Old Swedes'" is seen.

Both minister and people were much pleased with the work, and in a letter sent home we read, "thus through God's blessing we have completed the great work and built two fine churches, superior to any

built in this country, so that the English themselves, who now govern the province, and are beyond measure richer than we, wonder at what we have done. It is but lately that two governors, with their suites, have come to this place and visited our churches; the one, Francis Nicholson, Governor of Maryland and our great patron; the other is named Blackstone, and is Governor of Virginia." Some few years after the church had been erected it was found that the church walls had given way; some were in favor of strengthening them by means of iron work, but after consultation it was thought best to erect porches on each side of the church, one of which would answer as a vestry room, and the other for a vestibule or entrance to the church. This was immediately carried into effect, and the exterior of the church presents exactly the same appearance to-day as it did more than a quarter of a century before even Washington was born, and three-quarters of a century before the war of the Revolution took place.

With regard to the property of the church, it may not be amiss to add a word, as I know much misapprehension exists in the minds of many. Had proper care been exercised, had the congregation not been left so often without a rector, and had the financial affairs of the parish been attended to, this church would now be the second if not the richest religious corporation in the land.

For example, the congregation bought, for ninety pounds, twenty-five acres of land in the immediate vicinity of this church, to be, as the words run "a parsonage for the pastor and his heirs forever," and

yet through the grossest carelessness, lot after lot slipped out of the church's possession till now hardly anything remains. In the words of a writer upon this subject, "papers and documents disappeared through negligence, which if they could now be found would prove the Swedes' Church the lawful owner of ground on which in later days have been erected handsome mansions, and which would make the present poor congregation of Philadelphia one of the richest religious bodies in America. Nearly all they have remaining of the above-mentioned twenty-five acres, consists of a few city lots, the ground rent on which amounts to twenty-five or fifty cents apiece, while the ground is worth as many hundreds and even thousand dollars." In addition to this, the church owned ninety-six acres on the Schuylkill, which has nearly all been lost through possession of more than twenty-one years, and as an illustration of the way in which the property fell away, Dr. Clay states, "that a property which now yields quite a little income to the church was a few years since not known to belong to it, and was quite accidentally recovered out of the hands of a person, who about forty or fifty years ago, had rented it as a grass lot, and afterwards brought himself to believe that he was the owner of it." But we do not say these things to complain. When we see how often wealth is a curse instead of a blessing, not simply to individuals, but to societies and churches it is, perhaps, better as it is, and though we cannot take our rank among the wealthy congregations of the city, yet thanks be to God we are able, with His blessing, not

only to stand well before the community, but likewise to do our part in extending to others the blessings we enjoy.

But to return—we find that the worship was conducted in the manner required by the Swedish Liturgy, and though a regular sermon was ever preached in the forenoon, yet the clergyman was accustomed in the afternoon to conduct the service in a way which would make the congregations of these days, even far less than they now generally are, for in place of preaching, he walked up and down the aisles, to examine, not the children, but the adults, on their knowledge of the catechism, and to see how much they remembered of the sermon preached in the morning.

Clergyman after clergyman followed in due order, and though at one time there was a vacancy of four years, and many attached themselves to the English churches, yet when a clergyman did come, a change for the better was immediately perceived. But as there were no tides of immigration flowing from Sweden, as from England, in the natural course of events, the English language gradually supplanted the Swedish, and after Dr. Collin had been sent over in 1770, there were at his death so few understanding the language, that the necessity no longer existed, and as Dr. Morton has well said on the tablet on my right “he was the last of a long line of Missionaries sent over by the Mother Church in Sweden to break the Bread of Life to her children on this far distant shore.” For over half a century he took charge of the Swedish churches, and as he

died only in 1831, I know there are many here who can well remember him.

The parsonage then seems to have been a sort of Gretna Green, for in the forty-five years he ministered here, he married no less than three thousand thrée hundred and seventy-five couples. In 1795 he married one hundred and ninety-nine, and in the following year, one hundred and seventy-nine. Judging from some of the anecdotes told of Dr. Collin, he must have been a singular old man, but from the fact that he is remembered only by the peculiarities that marked the later years of his life, we are not to forget that he labored long and faithfully for many years, and both during and after the Revolutionary war his sufferings and privations were as great as any who preceded him, and certainly far greater than any of his successors. I have been much moved in reading his simple and affecting story as given in his own words. "My sufferings," he says, "have been very severe. During the war the rents of the church lands were insignificant, by the incredible depreciation of the Continental money, which finally passed one hundred and fifty to one specie dollar, and sunk in the hands of the unfortunate holders. From this cause, and from the failure of supplies from home, I was at times in want of necessities, while my constitution was so much injured by the fever and ague, that a change of place or the grave seemed to be the only alternative."

During Dr. Collin's ministry he was for many years dependent in a great measure upon his assistants, who were appointed from time to time, and

among them was the Rev. Jehu Curtis Clay, who soon after his ordination was called to that position for one year, and at the death of the Doctor was elected rector of the Swedish churches on the 5th of December, 1831. At that time the churches of Upper Merion, Kingsessing and Wicaco, were all united; but in 1843 by almost unanimous consent, they were formed into distinct parishes, each having its own separate rector.

But some one may ask at this stage, How is it that these Swedish churches (with the exception of the one at Upper Merion, which though not formally in connection, yet has ever had Episcopal clergymen as rectors,) why is it that they all are in connection with the Protestant Episcopal Church and not with the Lutheran? In the words of Dr. Clay who has treated this subject very fully, I can only say "that while there is no dissimilarity between the Swedish Lutheran and German Lutheran churches in faith or doctrine, there is much in regard to order or government. The Swedish church, though Lutheran in doctrine, is Episcopal in government. The Swedish reformers adopted the Augsburg Confession of Faith, but retained Episcopacy, and hence it was that Dr. Collin used the Episcopal prayer book in his ministry here, and the assistant ministers were always of the same church, and that before these churches were admitted into Convention, the Protestant Episcopal Bishop of Pennsylvania regularly visited and confirmed in them.

In Dr. Clay's appointment, we come to the last period in the history of the church. Did I not fear

to weary you, how I would love to dwell on the thirty-two years of his ministry here, but what more could I say than is known to most of you. He needs no words of praise, for as the tablet on my left says, "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." Under his wise and faithful labors the church greatly increased, so that at one time there were serious thoughts of building a new church, but wiser councils prevailed, and though the interior of the church was much altered, yet it was determined to preserve the exterior, as it had been from the beginning. Before the pews were altered and the galleries put in, there was in the east end of the church, an old-fashioned octagon shaped pulpit, with a small window behind, a large window originally there having been boarded up outside and bricked and plastered inside, and a small one placed in the centre. Over the pulpit was a sounding board, and in the chancel a small reading desk. There was an aisle, leading from the west door up the middle of the church, and another across it from the south door to the north side of the church. The pews were high and uncomfortable, but when in 1846 the alterations were made the church assumed the appearance it now presents.

The Rev. Mr. Leadenham, who had been Dr. Clay's assistant in the last year of his life, succeeded him in the rectorship of the church. He was followed by the Rev. Mr. Reed, who labored here successfully for three years, and the beautiful Sunday School Chapel which stands in the church yard will ever remain as a monument of his energy and perseverance.

For a quarter of a century nothing was done to improve the appearance of the church, and the ravages of time began to be apparent to us all. Last summer we determined to upholster, carpet, paint and beautify this house of God, without altering its general appearance, and the result of our efforts is evident to you all, in its present neatness and beauty.

There are many other points upon which I would like to speak. I should like to give some account of the old font before me, and the quaint cherubs which for scores of years have occupied their present position, for from time immemorial there has been a gallery at the west end of the church. I should like to speak about the bell which was originally cast in 1643, and on which is the simple inscription

“I to the church the living call,
And to the grave do summon all.”

I should like to speak about our old grave yard, where for over two hundred years the last solemn rites of the dead have been performed, and where, with birds warbling, and sweet flowers growing,

„ Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep,
Far from the madding crowd’s ignoble strife:
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way:
Yet even these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes, and shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.”

But as I now close, I feel anything but satisfied with the effort. There is so much to be said that I am glad to know the subject will be continued in the afternoon sermon.

And to the members of this church let me simply say, that in looking over the records of the past, I do not find that at all times there was perfect peace and harmony. Members became dissatisfied, congregations were at times divided, bitter words were spoken, vestries and rectors could not agree, and dark clouds overhung the parish. And though now in the good providence of God everything is so harmonious, though we are as a city that is at unity with itself, yet remember this house will be blessed of the Lord only as we improve our opportunities. O, then, "pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee; say, peace be within thy walls and plenteousness within thy palaces; for my brethren and companion's sake, I will wish thee prosperity."

It is no ordinary privilege that we enjoy to worship in such a place as this, hallowed by such sacred associations, for of this old church may it be truly said

"They all are passing from the land,
Those churches old and gray,
In which our fathers used to stand
In years gone by, to pray—
There meekly knelt those stern old men,
Who worshipped at our altars then.

"It was a church low built and square,
With belfry perched on high,

And no unseemly carvings there
To shock the pious eye.
That belfry was a modest thing,
In which a bell was wont to swing.

“It stood like many a country church,
Upon a spacious green;
Whence stile and by-path go in search
Of cot the hills between.
The rudest boor that turf would spare,
And turn aside his team with care.

“Hard thinkers were they, those old men,
And patient too, I ween;
Long words and knotty questions then
But made our fathers keen.
I doubt me if their sons would hear
Such lengthy sermons year by year.

“But all are passing fast away—
Those abstruse thinkers too—
Old churches with their walls of gray
Must yield to something new;
Be-Gothic'd things, all neat and white,
Greet everywhere the traveller's sight.”

Again, then, with all earnestness and sincerity would I offer up the prayer of God's servant of old, and say, “Therefore now let it please Thee to bless the house of Thy servant, that it may continue forever before Thee, for 'Thou O Lord God hath spoken it, and with Thy blessing let the house of Thy servant be blessed forever,” and may all the people say “Amen.”

AFTERNOON SERMON,

JUNE 19, 1870,

BY REV. JESSE Y. BURK,

Rector of Trinity Church, Southwark.

"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days."

Ecclesiastes xi, i.

It is with mingled emotions of diffidence and gladness that I attempt the duty which your Rector has entrusted to me. Revering as I do, all that is connected with the earlier fortunes of our American Church, it would be a glad thing for me to participate in any way in these memorial services; and I have rarely felt so honored, as by my appointment to preach one of your anniversary sermons.

It was intended that I should select some appropriate theme outside of those embraced in the strictly anniversary sermon of this morning, and yet involved in those records of the past, to which our minds are turned to-day. But herein arose a difficulty—not from paucity, but from a superabundance of material. I should have found it far easier to undertake a course of lectures on the history of which this Church is a resultant and a memento, than to select or condense, with any satisfaction, for a single sermon. The most I can do then, is to gather here and there from the story of the past, some of those events

which God was guiding for great results ahead, and to point out as I may their connection with the present. I take as a subject, finding its fitting illustrations in the present state of this venerable parish, God's providence in the re-union of severed branches of His Church, apart from man's intention, and I offer no other exposition of the text announced than that which is given in this correlative history of the English and the Swedish Churches. I ask you then, to listen to a purely historical discourse, trusting that the lesson which it involves may be one of encouragement to us in faithful work, and fitting to the gladness of the present occasion.

The great Northern Peninsula of Europe was one of the last last parts of that continent to receive, and perhaps the slowest to embrace the Gospel. It was inhabited by a hardy and rugged race, almost as isolated as the Eskimo of our day, but far superior to them in bodily and intellectual vigor. Under a cold northern sky that had none of the glowing beauty of the milder climates, and whose only glory was in the aurora's mystic glare, they worshiped gods of fierce and gloomy aspect; sung them in a language harsh, terse and vigorous, and in their rude barbarism nursed an influence which has become a healthful element in the languages and races of these later days. About the year 800 tidings of these heathens came to the court of the Franks, then a Christian people. It stirred the heart of Ansgar with missionary zeal, and forthwith he took a dangerous and lonely journey to these regions of the north. He preached the Gospel of Jesus to the followers of Odin, and with such success

that several communities of Christians were founded in the south of Sweden, and there was every prospect of the church prevailing there as it had done in other lands. But in a few brief years the young church passed away, either through relapses of the imperfectly converted, or the violence of the heathen foes; too far isolated from the main body of church to resist the influences of the darkness around it. For many years after this failure no effort was made to dispute the empire of heathenism over that vast region, later known as that of the Norwegians, Swedes and Finns; and the next attempt was linked with the romantic history of an exiled and outlaw Prince. Olaf Trygvesson had been rescued by his mother from the slaughter of his royal father's household, and carried from place to place to escape the usurper's power. The child grew to manhood, an exile in Denmark; and as he grew developed royal qualities of mind and body and excelled in all the bold and warlike accomplishments of the time. Once a royal page, he became a sea-king—the polite name for the then noble occupation of a pirate—and in his own vessel made many a profitable ravage on the shores of the North Sea. Several times he visited the British Isles and even in those early days found the plunder of the church his most remunerative spoil. But on one of the expeditions he was thrown in contact with a bishop of the English Church and so won over to the teachings of the holy man, that he embraced christianity, and his after life, though stormy and violent, gave us rude assurance of his stedfast adherence to his new found faith.

In the year 1000, just after his baptism, he made an expedition into Norway to recover his father's throne, and resolved at the same time to introduce the Christian faith along with his own rule, and to this end he carried with him Sigfrid, the Bishop who baptized him, and other ecclesiastics. In both designs he succeeded, reducing province after province to his sway and destroying paganism in each as he obtained a foothold. His method of preaching the gospel was brief and effective, but rather unevangelical. A modern poet well describes it in these imitative verses

“ King Olaf answered, I command
This land to be a Christian land ;
Here is my Bishop who the folk baptizes.”

Again

“ King Olaf from the doorway spoke,
Choose ye between two things, my folk,
To be baptized or given up to slaughter.
And seeing their leader stark and dead,
The people with a murmur said,
O King! baptize us with thy holy water.
So all the Drontheim land became
A Christian land in name and fame ;
In the old gods no more believing and trusting.”

I have told this story of 800 years ago, because it tells of England's Church having cast her bread upon the waters so long ago, and becoming the mother of the Swedish Church. Popery had not yet gained dominion over the British Church; it was yet in its apostolic simplicity and integrity, and whatever errors accompanied the execution, this mission was the last sent out from British shores, fairly repre-

senting her character before she was overwhelmed by Papal corruptions. Sigfrid, the Bishop, it is said, had been Archbishop of York. At all events he was a Bishop of the British line, and the Northern church which grew out of the labors of a long and blameless life, is therefore distinctly an offshoot of that venerable church whom we rejoice to recognize as our mother.

One more episode of the farther past, and then I will come nearer home. In a few brief years after Sigfrid's death, the shadow of the great Roman eclipse came stealing over the church in Sweden. Slowly and reluctantly, as in England, the domination and doctrine of Popery was yielded to, and for many, many years, an ever-deepening darkness was over all the land; "a darkness that might be felt."

Five hundred years after Sigfrid's time the Reformation began. Two brothers named Peterson, came to Sweden, filled with zeal for Luther's teachings, and their advent coinciding with important political revolutions, (as was the case with the same movement in England,) the errors of Popery were soon cast off and the Swedish Church reformed. The Reformation was *Lutheran*, because its impulse came from Luther; but the identity and integrity of the church was not lost, as in other reformations from the same source, for, as in England, all the church reformed, and its whole external organization was retained; it was still an Episcopal Church, still in its apostolic form, and therefore not disintegrated by the purifying process, but rather invigorated for a permanent and active life.

Suffer me to give a brief account of those early years of our own country, and particularly of these shores of the Delaware, which I propose to connect with the history of 500 and 1000 years ago. The bread was cast upon the waters when Bishop Sigfrid saw the Hebrides fading in his vessel's wake, and with holy zeal gazed northward to where the red light shook in "rifted streamers" over the dominions of Thor and Odin; when he gladly gave his life to plant the cross of Christ where the Mølner of Thor had ruled. Let me tell you how it came back after 800 years had gone.

You all know something of the discovery and early settlement of this country. For some time after the colonization of other portions, the South River was known only as a place in which it would probably be well to plant a colony. The Dutch were the first to attempt it. Within sight of this church, they built on Gloucester Point a fort, in 1624, which was soon after deserted. At various times during ten years they established trading posts, always, I believe, on the east or New Jersey side of the river, but never succeeded in making any permanent settlement.

About this time the Swedish government acquired the then common desire for American possessions, and in 1638 two ships, the "Key of Calmar" and the "Bird Grip," set sail from Gottenberg with a respectable colony of Swedish emigrants on board, prepared for a permanent and orderly living, and bringing with them as rector, the Rev. Reorus Torkillus. They sailed up the Delaware, making

their first settlement near where Wilmington now stands, and as they had acquired a title from the Indians of all the country on this side the river from Cape Henlopen to where Trenton now is, formed other settlements along the water side further up, including one on this spot, called Wicaco. Here they remained flourishing and peaceably until 1655, when the Dutch, who then held New York, disputed their right, and after some struggles, established dominion over them; not, however, breaking up their settlements nor interfering with their religious organization. In 1664 the English wrested their American provinces from the Dutch, the King granting them to his brother the Duke of York, who soon sent a force to take control of the Delaware settlements. In a few years the Dutch again obtained possession for a brief time, but the English regaining the country, this province was granted by charter to William Penn, and the history of Pennsylvania began.

During all these fluctuations the Swedes had maintained their character as a steady, hard-working and thrifty people, holding fast their possessions, and endeavoring to live in all things as they would have done in Sweden. They had all along been served by ministers sent out to them from Sweden, except one who was Dutch; and William Penn describes them in terms of hearty commendation as an orderly and religious people.

But a new order of things was now on hand. Colonization on a far more vigorous scale than ever before was to take place, and almost any other

people than the Swedes would have been absorbed or expelled by so large an influx of so different a people. Penn's idea was to establish here a Quaker commonwealth. With a Quaker Englishman an Episcopal Swede could have scarcely more than one common interest, and that was of *£. s. d.* or rather of gilders and stivers. But by the year 1700, in which this church was built, another English element began to appear with which we have more to do in the study of our subject.

You have heard this morning, the story of this church's personal history, which I need not relate again, but will endeavor to set before you the parallel history of the time, especially as relating to our own church.

In 1697 the Rev. Messrs. Rudman, Biork and Auren, were sent hither by the King of Sweden, and the Swedish Church received a new impulse of life from its renewed intercourse with home, its ministers and the royal gifts of books and kindly words. The Rev. Mr. Rudman became rector of this church; the old block house was torn down and this venerable building completed in 1700. The Swedes were encouraged by the promise of a constant supply of ministers, and the missionaries themselves by good prospects of promotion at home after a few years of colonial life.

The English Church was established in the other colonies while yet scarcely existent in Pennsylvania. And I cannot begin to tell of the beginning of our church here without a grateful mention of one whose name is almost unknown to our people, but whose

memory deserves enduring monuments in all our Eastern Dioceses. I refer to the Rev. Dr. Thomas Bray, commissary to Maryland. He was an English clergyman of rare abilities and rarer zeal and devotion, who turned his attention to the extension of the church in the English colonies; and began to work by procuring valuable and instructive libraries for missionary stations, and afterwards for parishes at home. He procured no less than thirty-nine of these for the churches in North America. Growing more earnest in the work, he planned and organized that noble agency, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, in 1698; and, finding that the foreign missionary work was more than one society could manage with that at home, in 1701, at Lambeth Palace, there was formed out of the first society another called the Society for the Promotion of the Gospel in Foreign Parts—a venerable society which yet exists, and yet pursues its noble and apostolic work. It is to the noble zeal of the Rev. Dr. Bray, and its perpetuation in this society for the promotion of the gospel, that our old American churches owe, under God, almost their existence and certainly their prosperity. And I am glad at this time to offer this grateful tribute to names that are too little known among us. In 1699 Dr. Bray visited Maryland under commission from the Bishop of London, and greatly strengthened the church there by his wise administration. While there his eyes were turned to Quaker Pennsylvania, and such is the contagious character of the missionary spirit, that a subscription was made by the Maryland clergy for

sending a missionary into the fastnesses of Quakerism. This project, however, was not carried out, but Bray on his return to England never lost sight of Pennsylvania, and stimulated the society to constant interest in it.

The history of the church in Pennsylvania was this: Bishop Compton had wisely procured the insertion into the Charter granted to Penn, a stipulation that whenever twenty persons in any one place desired the ministration of the Church of England, they should be allowed to do so without molestation. A few were soon found so disposed, and in 1695 the first Christ Church was built at Second and Market Streets; and the Rev. Mr. Clayton sent out as its minister, receiving a salary of £50 from the King, in addition to that raised from the parish. This was not the present, but a much smaller building; but Mr. Clayton was so successful in his ministrations that he gathered a congregation of 700 persons previous to his untimely death. In the year 1700, the Rev. Mr. Evans succeeded him at Christ Church.

About this time some of the Welsh settlers at Radnor, Merion and Oxford, who were Episcopalians had formed congregations for divine service, although they had no minister. I do not know that they received any ministrations from the Rev. Mr. Clayton, first rector of Christ Church, but we now find the first dawning of the re-union of the English and Swedish Churches, in the services held for these in Oxford Church, by Mr. Rudman the rector of this church. Mr. Evans of Christ Church was a most

earnest and successful minister. In 1703 he had gathered a church at Chester; soon after at Marcus Hook and Concord, and church buildings were speedily erected there. Although he continued at Christ Church until 1718, there were several intervals in his ministration, and during one of these we again find signs of the union; Mr. Rudman officiating for the congregation until they could obtain an English supply, or, as it happened, until his death. About the same time we find acknowledgement that the Rev. Mr. Biork, Swedish rector at Christina (who preached the first sermon in this church,) officiated for the English church at Appoquinimy, (now Middletown.)

In the year 1727 the present Christ Church was built. In that year on three Sundays its congregation worshiped in this church. When the Rev. Mr. Hesselius was rector of this church, we find the Society for the Promotion of the Gospel, granting him a stipend of £10 a year, with a most grateful acknowledgement of his services in the vacant churches of the province.

From this time on the English Church increased in the province, under the able ministrations of such men as Evans, Barton, Club, Jenny and Duche, and fostered always by the venerable society which the soul of Bray inspired, until the birth of the American Episcopal Church at the consecration of Bishop White. During this period the Swedish Churches did not *grow*, but they stubbornly held their own, only yielding to the innovation of language, which the gradual extinction of the Swedish required. The Swedish mission ended on the death of the Rev.

Nicholas Collin, 45 years rector of this church, in 1831. During his rectorship he constantly used our Prayer Book, and the Bishop of Pennsylvania regularly visited and confirmed in these churches. When therefore, all connection with the Diocese of Upsal having ended, and their missionary rector deceased, the independent Swedish Churches sought new rectors and a corporate union; they naturally elected Presbyters of our Protestant Episcopal Church, and one by one came into union with our Convention. So came to her again the bread which our mother cast upon the northern sea these centuries ago. So the parted streams that murmured on in lonely and rugged ways so far apart, blend into one placid current as the rocks are passed and quiet meadows gained. So God gives to His church that unity which no human wit can plan, but which comes when each is dutiful and faithful, and unwavering in the right.

Pardon me, brethren, if I have wearied you with a story over long, and made wearisome perhaps by needful condensation. What else could I do, with all this wealth, and more than this, of far-reaching and ever-blending history before me? I gather from these far-distant and yet relating facts, one of the the many lessons which are taught us by this venerable pile, and one which may well serve to deepen our affection and our reverence for it. It stands not only a monument of that piety which sanctified the settlements all along our shores, not only a holy memorial of the ancestors of many who are here, not only the hallowed gateway through which

islands have passed to the temple that is not
le with hands—besides all these, it is something
re: it is a memorial of old triumphs of faith in
distant lands, when the sagas of the heroes yielded
to the Evangelists of Christ. It tells of the noblest
and most enduring missionary venture of our ancient
church. It bids us heed how inscrutably, how slow-
ly perhaps, but how surely God builds the fabric of
His one and Catholic Church; and it assures us how
freely Faith may make her ventures on the promises
of God.

Be glad then, O friends who love the kingdom of
our Lord, not only that these walls have a history
of 170 years, but for all the hallowed memories that
cluster round them, and which are the heritage of
all the church. Make your thank offering to Him
who has so crowned our fathers' faith with blessing,
and then forth to the vocations of these later times,
more ready to work and give and do, because of this
testimony of the centuries that have gone.

And to you, brethren of the vestry and congrega-
tion of this church, I have a word to say, which I
pray you not to take amiss. Under ordinary circum-
stances and in a modern church, the vestry are
simply guardians of the needful buildings and lands
of a parish, and need only consider the conveniences
of the present; but I ask you to consider yourselves
as trustees of a property which belongs not simply
to the heirs of the Swedish Church, nor to a single
corporation. The venerable antiquity of this place
vests it in our commonwealth, our city, our whole
Episcopal Church. Every Pennsylvanian should

hold it as a sacred relic of the early days of the republic. Every Philadelphian should cherish it as a landmark in that history to which he fondly links his own. Every churchman must regard it as hallowed beyond the usual sacredness of churches by all that it has seen. By our dear old commonwealth, by the city of our birth, and above all by that church which is dearer to us still, I pray you guard this place for all. Let no calls of expediency, no pretense of improvement, nor any lightening of burdens, tempt you ever to neglect, nor desecrate, nor change this, which is not so much yours as it is your states', your church's, and your God's. So faithfully keeping your trust I pray that you may keep many such a day as this within these walls, and that all whose worship here has witnessed to the unity of God's church below, may share in that perfect and blissful unity which the redeemed shall have in Heaven.

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